

Students' Perceptions of University Library Spaces; Evidence from Government Universities in Sri Lanka

SM Samaranyaka^{1#}, FR Arooz¹ and WP Abeyrathna²

¹Faculty of Built Environment and Spatial Sciences, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka

²Faculty of Engineering, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

#smalindas@gmail.com

Abstract

Academic libraries are fulfilling a special role in higher education institutes. It is one of the most important, memorable and highly functional spaces for campus communities. Conceptually, libraries are considered as the brains of universities. However, the rapid physical developments and growing student population of universities are demanding the well-designed and highly functional spaces within universities including libraries. Thus, it is important to know the perceptions of main stakeholders towards the spaces they used in campuses. Therefore, this study is predominantly focused to research on the students' perceptions of university library spaces to incorporate in designer guidelines which can be used in practicing the library architecture in Sri Lanka. Thus, the methodology was adopted to find students' perceptions using a quantitative analysis. The structured questionnaire was circulated among the sample of 150 university students who use the library spaces representing the selected three case studies. Using IBM SPSS software, collected data were evaluated via the reliability tests, the mean value tests and the correlation tests. The issues pertaining with the case studies were prioritized on their levels of impact and the degree of negligence levels in common ground. The list of drawbacks that should be addressed, design recommendations and solutions for identified problems were provided individually to uplift the standards of all three case studies. Pierson correlations tests were also used to determine the relationship between demographic data and measured parameters. Finally, a check-list was presented to incorporate in designer guidelines to ensure the quality of academic library spaces.

Keywords: *Academic library, Design framework, Postgraduates, User perception, Universities of Sri Lanka, Undergraduates*